

# All Summer Long

by Dorothea Benton Frank

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## About the Book

*Dorothea Benton Frank novels are filled with smart and witty fiction that every reader wants on their bookshelf: soulful, edgy stories about realistic characters familiar to us all that explore the most deeply felt moments of life with wry humor and heart.*

ALL SUMMER LONG follows one charming New York couple --- prominent interior designer Olivia Ritchie and her husband Nicholas Seymour, an English professor and true southern gentleman. They are seemingly polar opposites, yet magnetically drawn together and in love for more than 14 years.

As they prepare to relocate to Charleston, S.C., Olivia, the ultimate New Yorker, has reservations about the promise she made to retire in the Lowcountry, where Nick wants to return home and lead a more peaceful life. They are moving north to south, fast pace versus slow pace and downsizing. Nick is ecstatic. Olivia is not. She can't let Nick know that their finances are not what he thought. Her client list is evaporating, their monetary reserves are dwindling and maybe that house she picked out on Sullivans Island needs too much work. Thank God, for her assistant, Roni Larini, her right (and sometimes left) hand.

As they find themselves pondering the next step of their lives, Olivia and Nick travel with her billionaire clients and their friends and are swept up into the world of the ultra-rich and explore the globe with a cast of zany eccentrics over one tumultuous, hot summer. All as Olivia grapples with what lies ahead for her and Nick.

This is a story of how plans evolve and lives change in unexpected ways, how even those who have everything are still looking for something more. Even the most successful people can often struggle to keep things together. *ALL SUMMER LONG* asks the ultimate question: can money buy happiness? From Sullivans Island to Necker Island to Nantucket to the beaches of Southern Spain, we'll come to recognize the many faces of true love, love that deepens and endures but only because one woman makes a tremendous leap of faith. And that leap changes everything.

## Discussion Guide

1. One of the strongest themes in *ALL SUMMER LONG* is whether or not money can buy you love, or at least happiness. Of the various couples in the book, how many do you think are truly happy? Which ones seem to be together for the lifestyle? Of all the characters, which one do you think cares the least about money?
2. Secrets are causing much strife and turmoil in several of the relationships in *ALL SUMMER LONG*. Have you ever kept a big secret (the kind that keeps you up at night) from your partner? If so, what happened when the secret came to light? If not, what do you think would happen if you *were* concealing something and it came out?
3. With her financial troubles, it seems like now is not the time for Olivia to be moving away from New York City. She knows they can't afford for her to retire yet, and what she needs is more jobs, not fewer. Keeping this in mind, do you think Olivia should reconsider the agreement made 14 years earlier with Nick about moving to Charleston? Should she have asked for a few years delay and given herself time to pad their bank account?
4. How open are you and your partner about household finances? Do you manage them together, or is one of you the chief accountant and bill payer? If one of you kept a financial secret from the other, what impact would that have on your relationship when it eventually came to light?
5. Have you ever made a promise in the early days of a relationship that ultimately you weren't able to keep? Can you take back an oath made from good intentions if, down the road, circumstances have changed and that promise has become an obstacle?
6. How honest do you think Nick and Olivia's relationship is? Do they talk openly about all the issues affecting their marriage? Do they give each other their honest opinion? If your answer is no, why do you think that is? Do you see their level of truthfulness changing by the end of the novel one way or the other?
7. If you had suspicions that your partner was cheating, or thinking about cheating, how would you like to think you would confront the issue? Would you address those suspicions as soon as they arose, or would you wait a while? Have you and your partner ever discussed what infidelity would do to your relationship?
8. Maritza and Olivia have an odd relationship. Maritza considers Olivia to be a true friend, but Olivia sees their friendship as more of a business relationship, even though she knows it means more to Maritza. Is this disingenuous of Olivia? Have you ever been in this type of position where someone who has employed you has expected more of you personally?
9. There's an old adage that says "a tiger can't change its stripes." Do you think people can change, or, like the tiger, are

they basically unchangeable?

**10.** If you had old friends, from before your marriage, who, for whatever reason, treated your partner in a demeaning way, how would you handle it? Would you find occasions to socialize with them without your partner, or would it be difficult to maintain the relationships? What if the opposite occurred, and old friends of your partner treated you disparagingly? How would you want it handled?

## Author Bio

Dorothea Benton Frank was the author of 20 bestselling novels set in the Low Country of South Carolina. She passed away on September 2, 2019 at the age of 67 following a brief struggle with leukemia.

Photo Credit: Debbie Zammit

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